

Charles Wood House
1 North Water Street
Nantucket
Nantucket County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-898

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(D-NANT)
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

CHARLES WOOD HOUSE

HABS

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Location: 1 North Water Street (on south corner Whalers Lane), Nantucket, Massachusetts. Also known as the Easton-Wood House and Athearn House.

Present Owner: Nantucket Historical Association

Present Use: House was razed in 1967 to make room for construction of the Nantucket Historical Association Museum.

Brief Statement of Significance: Typical of houses built in great numbers right after the Great Fire of 1846.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1843 -- Charles Wood purchased from George Cobb, William R. Easton and James Macy, Assignees of goods and estate of James Athearn, insolvent debtor, for \$440 the land and building thereon, earlier described as a store-house. There appears to have been no dwelling-house on the land at this time: December 15, 1843.
- 1846 -- All buildings on this location destroyed by fire. Charles Wood erected his dwelling-house here soon afterwards.
- 1856 to 1870 -- Charles Wood purchased additional adjacent property around his dwelling from the heirs of Nathaniel Rand. After 1846 Rand's house stood on the northeast corner North Water and Broad Streets, with Rand's paint shop in back of it on Broad Street. At a much later date the house was moved from the corner to another location.
- 1870 to 1873 -- Frederick C. Alley bought for \$1700.
1873 to 1889 -- Franklin H. Delano bought for \$2750.
1889 to 1891 -- Frederick Delano Hitch
1891 to 1923 -- Emily M. Treadwell
1923 to 1924 -- Herbert G. Worth, Byron E. Pease and Harry A. Tobey
1924 to 1926 -- Harry A. Tobey
1926 to 1938 -- Lucinda H. Handy
1938 to 1957 -- Lenore Y. Veo
1957 to 1961 -- Marvin Parle and Malcolm R. Parle

1961 to 1962 -- Nantucket Historical Trust
1962 to date -- Nantucket Historical Association

2. Date of erection: Apparently soon after 1846. In 1856 Charles Wood bought "adjacent land around his dwelling," and in 1870 the deed from him to Frederick C. Alley reads "being the premises formerly occupied by me as a residence." The map of 1858 shows the house of C. Wood at the present location. (Abstract, Records Registry of Deeds, Nantucket, Mass.)
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known.
5. Notes on alterations and additions: In recent years, around 1940, a large wing on the south side was added and for a time it was used as a restaurant.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Around 1800, according to The Portfolio, North Water Street was known as Mitchell Street because it was inhabited by so many people of that name. James Mitchell owned this property prior to 1843 and the Athearn ownership. The streets now known as North and South Water were at that time one continuous way, although there was a decided jog at Broad Street. (Abstract, Nantucket Lands and Land Owners by Henry Barnard Worth)

A street running between this property and the present Whaling Museum, shown on map of 1858, was closed during Miss Treadwell's ownership, after she acquired a number of pieces of land adjacent and after an exchange of land between her and the Town of Nantucket. In 1930 the former brick candle-house became the Whaling Museum.

The dwelling house at No. 1 North Water Street was given to the Nantucket Historical Association by the Nantucket Historical Trust in 1962. The Trust, following its policy of preserving and contributing to the history and architecture of the Island, purchased the building which will probably soon be demolished to provide building space for the Nantucket Historical Association's new museum.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Photograph in Inquirer and Mirror (newspaper), Oct. 27, 1961; photograph ca. 1890 (photocopy included in HABS Mass. 957 photo-data book): photograph of demolition, Inquirer and Mirror, January, 1967.

Prepared by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin
Nantucket, Massachusetts
August, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural Character: This house is typical of many small Creek Revival houses erected on the Island during its last period of prosperity in the 1840's. It is one of a number which were put up in the area destroyed by the great fire of 1846. The plan varies considerably from the traditional Nantucket plan. The side main entrance allows a large front room with windows on three sides. This house was chosen for HABS not because it has special merit in comparison with the others, but because it will be demolished in 1967.
2. Condition of fabric: The building has been chopped up considerably by new partitions and at least two extensions have been added to the original structure. The whole is being allowed to deteriorate and therefore the finish is in somewhat shabby condition. The structure, however, appears to be generally sound except for some deterioration under the original south entry porch.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 26' - 7" west (street) side, 31' - 6½", east, 44' - 7", north and south (dimensions of original structure); two stories with full, useable basement and small cupola (local term - lookout); three bays on street side; four on entry side; original structure rectangular with one-story rectangular extension on south wall; main entry and entry porch on south wall; later addition to the east of original structure and another to the south of that one.
2. Foundations: Brick 16" thick on west portion of original structure, 8" thick on east portion.
3. Wall construction, finish and color: Exterior walls 7" thick, probably stud construction, with sheathing and clapboards, clapboards covered with modern yellow paint.
4. Structural System: Wood frame, structure covered (not exposed as in earlier buildings).
5. Porches: Entry porch of wood on south side with fluted Doric column at corner.

6. Chimneys: Two small brick chimneys, one west, other east of cupola, perhaps original was removed when hot air heating was put in, rebuilt to provide flue for hot water heating furnace.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main (south) entrance has plain eared trim with projecting lintel. There are leaded glass sidelights on either side of the single recessed panel door.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Window trim is similar to main entrance doorway trim. Windows are six-over-six double hung on first and second stories, eight-over-eight on basement. Exterior louvered shutters originally on all windows, few original pairs remain.
8. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Gable (end to major street), modern composition shingle roofing over main part (nineteenth century photo shows wood shingles), hipped roof over porch and one story extension to south covered with metal roofing in sheets, perhaps original (nineteenth century photo shows balustrade around edge of this roof), cupola has low pitch roof (nineteenth century photo shows slight curve here rising to peak).
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Dentil cornice on long sides and on gable short return at foot of rake, wood gutter constitutes crown mold on long sides, simple cornice on one story extension.
 - c. Cupola: Small square cupola, with two round headed windows on each side (now covered over), each pair of windows flanked by a matching blank arch, five brackets at eaves on each side.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: First floor: main entry and stairhall on long side of house allowed large parlor across front of house, three other rooms grouped around stairhall. Second floor: front room has pointed-arch ceiling, two rooms in rear.
2. Stairways: Simple stair, one landing, unequal runs at right angles, simple large square bottom newel, turned newels and square balusters, very steep ladder stair to cupola, original straight and winding stairs to basement removed.

3. Flooring: Random width boards ca. 6" -8", some modern floor covering over original wood.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls, plaster, papered; ceilings, plaster, some papered.
5. Doorways and doors: First floor: Four-panel, two long over two short, panels recessed, simple molding; two doorways in parlor have slightly-angled, molded pediment, others have straight molded lintel. Second floor: some four-panel doors, recessed panels, no molding, two small panels with lights over two long panels; some two-panel doors; simple trim, some flat with slightly angled pediment.
6. Decorative features and trim: In general, simple Greek Revival trim front parlor on first floor is most elaborate with slightly-angled pediments over doors and windows and wood mantelpiece with free-standing Roman Ionic columns, large base with molding at top. Window trim usually same as door trim in room (see above). Other mantelpieces simple, one with half-round Roman Ionic pilasters.
7. Notable hardware: Knobs on interior doors of first floor appear to be silver. They are of a type found in much more elaborate houses on the Island (Hadwen-Satler House, 95 Main Street), which do not turn but operate by means of a small latch. Second floor doors have wood knobs; two-part cast iron hinges, loose joint.
8. Lighting: Modern electric.
9. Heating: Probably originally by stove, later hot air with swirl-type cast iron outlets set in soapstone, now hot water radiation system.

D. Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation and general setting: Main entrance on long side faces south, gable end on major street faces west. north side on minor street, small yard to south, vacant corner lot south of that.
2. Outbuildings: None.
3. Landscaping and walls, enclosures: Path along up to entry porch, nineteenth century stereopticon view shows a high, vertical matched board fence running south from southwest corner of house, four bays between five matched board posts with moulding at top.

Prepared by George L. Wrenn, III
Nantucket, Massachusetts
July, 1966

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the 1966 Historic American Buildings Survey summer project on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the first project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was George L. Wrenn, III. Student architects who assisted in the preparation of the measured drawings were Peter B. Brill (University of Illinois), R. Bruce Burgess (Virginia Polytechnic Institute), Gary M. Burk (Texas Technological College), Davis L. Jahncke, Jr. (Tulane University), and Sheldon G. Weber (Columbia University). Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Cortlandt V. D. Hubbard of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, July 1971.